

.Politically the Utilitarian doctrines were throughout the period of their prevalence an appanage of the Liberal party, and in the political sphere accordingly the problem of resistance -was to recreate the Tory party so as to make it a bulwark against all that was devastating in the philosophy of the hour. This was the problem that presented itself to Peel after the Reform Bill, and his assumption of office in 1834 is therefore a critical event in the history of English parties.

In 1834 England, though frightened at the reality of Eeform, still adhered to its phrases; it was inclined, as practical England, to maintain existing institutions; but, as theoretical England, it was suspicious that they were indefensible. No one had arisen, either in Parliament, the Universities, or the Press, to lead the public mind to the investigation of principles; and not to mistake, in their reformations, the corruption of practice for fundamental ideas. It was this perplexed, ill-informed, jaded, shallow generation, repeating cries which they did not comprehend, and wearied with the endless ebullitions of their own barren conceit, that Sir Eobert Peel was summoned to govern. It was from such materials, ample in quantity, but in all spiritual qualities most deficient; with great numbers, largely acred, Consoled up to their chins, but without knowledge, genius, thought, truth, or faith, that Sir Eobert Peel was to form a 'great Conservative party on a comprehensive basis.'*

Disraeli, as we have seen, in his last speech at Taunton praised in the highest terms the policy and measures of the Peel administration ; but his maturer view, the view of *Coning sly*, was that the whole attempt was premature, precipitated by < the tactics of those short-sighted intriguers who persisted in looking upon a revolution as a mere party struggle, and would not permit the mind of the nation to work through the inevitable phases that awaited it.' The result was that Peel, though he did his work of reconstructing the Tory party like a 'dexterous politician,' failed to realise those prescient views of a great statesman in which he

¹ *Goningsby*, Bk. H. ch. 4.

